

Message Text

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41

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11

FRB-02 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 TRSE-00 XMB-07 OPIC-12

CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-10 SS-15 STR-08

CEA-02 AGR-20 PA-03 PRS-01 USIA-15 IO-13 RSR-01 /199 W

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R 031745Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5975

INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

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PASS AGRICULTURE

E.O. 11652: NA/A

TAGS: EAGR, IN

SUBJ: WEEKLY FOODGRAIN SITUATION

REF: NEW DELHI 8739

BEGIN SUMMARY - MONSOON ACTIVITY WAS VIGOROUS IN THE NORTHERN SUB/HIMALAYAN PARTS OF INDIA WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY EXCLUDING TAMIL NEDU AND SOUTH-WEST ANDHRA PRADESH RECEIVING GENERALLY SCANTY RAINFALL DURING THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 1. CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM JUNE 1 - AUGUST 1 WAS NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL IN 28 OF THE 35 WEATHER ZONES ACCOUNTING FOR APPROXIMATELY 78 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL KHARIF CEREAL GRAIN PRODUCTION OF THE COUNTRY. THERE WAS A NUMBER OF FOOD RELATED DISTURBANCES DURING THE PAST WEEK WITH THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT BEING SHIV
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SENA LED IN BOMBAY AND OPPOSITION PARTY SPONSORED IN KERALA.

THERE HAVE BEEN UNCONFIRMED REPORTS THAT INDIA HAS OR WILL
ASK RUSSIA TO DIVERT WHEAT CARRYING SHIPS TO INDIAN PORTS.
END SUMMARY.

1. MONSOON ACTIVITY STRENGTHENED THROUGHOUT THE SUB-HIMALAYAN
NORTHERN PARTS OF INDIA DURING THE WEEK ENDING AUGUST 1.
WIDESPREAD RAINS OCCURRED IN EASTERN UTTAR PRADESH AND BIHAR
THUS ENDING A MONTH-LONG DRY SPELL IN THESE AREAS. RAINFALL
IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY, EXCLUDING TAMIL NADU AND SOUTH-
WEST ANDHRA PRADESH, WAS GENERALLY DEFICIENT. OF THE 35 WEATHER
ZONES 15 RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL DURING THE
WEEK. CUMULATIVE RAINFALL FROM JUNE 1 TO AUGUST 1, 1973
WAS NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL IN 28 OF THE 35 WEATHER ZONES.
THESE 28 WEATHER ZONES ACCOUNT FOR APPROXIMATELY 78 PERCENT
OF THE TOTAL KHARIF CEREAL
GRAIN PRODUCTION IN THE COUNTRY, USING AS A BASE THE DISTRIBUTION
OF KHARIF PRODUCTION DURING 1970-71. THIS SITUATION, IN RELATION
TO APPROXIMATELY CORRESPONDING PERIODS OF TIME FOR PREVIOUS
YEARS, IS BETTER THAN 1972, ABOUT THE SAME AS IN 1971 AND NOT
EQUAL TO 1970. IN 1972 OUT OF 35 WEATHER ZONES, 12 ZONES ACCOUNTING
FOR APPROXIMATELY 27 PERCENT OF THE KHARIF CEREAL GRAIN PRODUCTION
RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL. IN 1971 OUT OF A TOTAL
OF 34 WEATHER ZONES 24 ACCOUNTING FOR 78 PERCENT OF THE KHARIF
PRODUCTION RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL WHILE IN 1970
OUT OF 34 WEATHER ZONES 30 ZONES ACCOUNTING FOR 87 PERCENT OF THE
KHARIF PRODUCTION RECEIVED NORMAL OR ABOVE NORMAL RAINFALL.

2. THERE WERE A NUMBER OF FOOD RELATED DISTURBANCES REPORTED
DURING THE PAST WEEK. BY FAR THE TWO MOST SIGNIFICANT WERE THE
SHIV SENA (A LOCAL MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL PARTY) LED DISTURBANCE
IN BOMBAY AND THE OPPOSITION SPONSORED BANDH IN KERALA. (SEE SEPTTEL).

3. CONGEN MADRAS REPORTS HIGH PRICES AND SCARCITY CONDITIONS
CONTINUE TO DOMINATE THE FOOD FRONT IN KERALA DURING THE SECOND
HALF OF JULY. THE PRESENT SITUATION IS REPORTED LIKELY TO
CONTINUE UNTIL THE NEW CROP STARTS ARRIVING IN THE MARKET IN
SEPTEMBER.

4. DURING A LIK SABHA (LOWER HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT) SESSION
THIS WEEK, MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE SHINDE ONCE AGAIN
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REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE-OVER THE WHOLESALE
TRADE IN RICE THIS FALL. MINISTER SHINDE DID NOT INDICATE WHAT
THE PROCUREMENT PRICE WOULD BE FOR RICE OR OTHER KHARIF CROPS
BUT STATED THESE PRICES WOULD BE FIXED BEFORE THE HARVESTING
SEASON AND IN LIGHT OF THE EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THIS YEAR'S
RABI PROCUREMENT. NEWSPAPER ARTICLES DURING THE PAST MONTH HAVE
BEEN PREDOMINANTLY NEGATIVE CONCERNING THE GOVERNMENT TAKE-OVER
OF THE WHOLESALE RICE TRADE. MINISTER SHINDE ALSO INDICATED THIS

WEEK IN ANOTHER LIK SABHA SESSION THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING RAISING THE ISSUE PRICE OF FOODGRAINS FROM GOVERNMENT STOCKS IN ORDER TO REDUCE THE SUBSIDY WHICH THIS YEAR IS EXPECTED TO BE SUBSTANTIALLY ABOVE THE ORIGINAL ESTIMATE OF 1.3 BILLION RUPEES (\$173 MILLION).

5. THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RUMORES PLUS TWO PRESS REPORTS INDICATING THAT INDIA HAS OR WOULD ASK RUSSIA TO DIVERT WHEAT CARRYING SHIPS TO INDIAN PORTS. WE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT THIS WILL OCCUR.

6. CONGEN BOMBAY REPORTS THAT 17,000 TONS OF CANADIAN WHEAT IS CURRENTLY BEING UNLOADED AT THE BOMBAY PORT. A QUALITY CONTROL OFFICER FROM THE FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA DISCLOSED THAT THIS WHEAT CONTAINS 0.4 PERCENT ERGOT. FCI OFFICIAL INFORMED AG OFFICER THAT THE QUALITY OF THIS WHEAT WAS KNOWN AT THE TIME OF PURCHASE BUT UNDER THE CURRENT TIGHT GRAIN SITUATION FOREIGN SUPPLIERS FOLLOW A "TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT" ATTITUDE.

7. COMMENT - THE NOTABLE FEATURE OF THE MONSOON PERFORMANCE SO FAR THIS YEAR HAS BEEN ITS UNEVEN DISTRIBUTION. THERE HAVE BEEN LONG BREAKS IN RAINFALL DURING JUNE-JULY, ESPECIALLY IN UTTAR PRADESH, BIHAR, TAMIL NADU, PARTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH, WEST RAJASTHAN, GUJARAT AND MAHARASHTRA. PERFORMANCE OF THE MONSOON IN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WILL BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN DETERMINING THE SIZE OF THIS YEAR'S KHARIF HARVEST.
MOYNIHAN

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